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EXCAVATIONS AT 'EN BESOR

by

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3.2.2 THE HELLENISTIC POTTERY FROM 'EN BESOR - STRATUM I*

MOSHE FISCHER and OREN TAL

The pottery assemblage discussed here is composed of fragments of bowls, kraters, jars, a fish plate, a cooking-pot and a lamp:

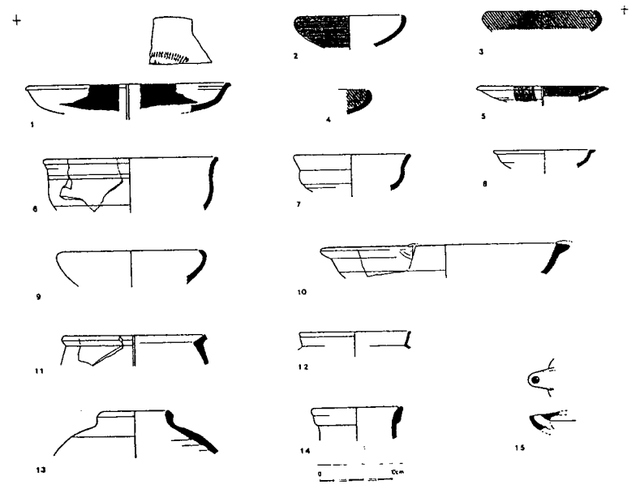

Fig. 1.Hellenistic pottery from stratum I

Bowls

Typologically the bowls can be divided into fine ware and common ware.

Fine ware (4 bowls); These can be divided into three groups: 1. Low flaring-walled bowl (Fig. 1:1)

2. Incurved rim bowl (Fig. 1:2-3)

3. Low vertical-walled bowl (Fig. 1:4).

Common ware (4 bowls): These can be divided into two groups:

1. Everted rim bowl (Fig. 1:6-8)

2. Incurved rim bowl (Fig. 1:9)

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* First publication.

Kraters

These are of two types:

1. Flange rim (Fig. 1:10)

2. Offset lip (Fig. 1:11)

Jars

1. Holemouth jar (Fig. 1:13)

2. Collared-rim jar (Fig. 1:14)

Fish plate (Fig. 1:5)

Cooking-pot (Fig. 1:12)

Lamp (Fig. 1:15)

CATALOGUE

Low flaring-walled bowl (Fig. 1:1)
D. rim 26.5 cm. (Inv.001)
Description: A few fragments of rim and body preserving about one-fifth of the vessel. Greek Black Glaze. High-temperature fired fine orange-pinkish ware (7.5YR 8/6) with occasional minute white grits. Covered with black glaze (10YR 9/1) on interior and exterior. Decorated with palm branches encircled by two lines of roulettes on the floor.
*Parallels: Samaria-Sebaste III:*244, Fig.48:2-3; *Ashdod II-III:*52, Fig.14:11.
Suggested Date: ca. late mid-4th-2nd century BCE.

Incurved rim bowl (Fig. 1:2)
D.rim 14 cm. (Inv.002)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one-sixth of the vessel. Eastern Sigillata D (Sigillata Cipriota). High-temperature fired fine greyish-brown ware (5YR 4/2) with dark grey core (5YR 5/1) and fairly dense minute quartz grits. Covered with brownish-grey slip (7.5YR 4/2) on interior and exterior. Decorated on the outside with a shallow incised line encircling the body at the mid-line.
Parallels: Hayes 1985:84, Tav. XIX:12-Form P 20.
Suggested Date: ca. early 1st century BCE.

Incurved rim bowl (Fig.1:3)

D.rim 14.5 cm. (Inv.003)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one-tenth of the vessel. High-temperature fired semi-fine reddish-brown ware (2.5YR 5/4) with fairly dense small black and white grits. Covered with reddish-black slip (10R3/1) on interior and exterior.
*Parallels: Samaria-Sebaste III:*223-225, Fig.38:1-2,6; Tel Michal (Fischer 1989:177-178, Fig. 13.1:13), Caesarea (Berlin 1992:113, Fig.51:6).
Suggested Date: ca. 3rd-1st century BCE.

Low vertical-walled bowl (Fig. 1:4)
D.rim 18 cm. estimated (Inv.004)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one- tenth of the vessel. High-temperature fired semi-fine yellowish-brown ware (7.5YR 7/6) with fairly dense small black and white grits. Covered with greyish-brown slip (7.5YR 4/2) on interior and exterior.
Parallels: Ashdod II-III:54, Fig.15:14; Maresha (Kloner and Hess 1985:127, Fig.1:12).
Suggested Date: ca. 3rd-1st century BCE.

Fish plate (Fig.1:5)
D. rim 16 cm. (Inv.005)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one-eighth of the vessel. Moderate-temperature fired sandy greyish-brown ware (7.5YR 6/4) with fairly dense small black and white grits. Covered with reddish-brown slip (2.5YR 4/6) on the inside and upper body on the outside.
*Parallels: Samaria-Sebaste III:*222, Fig.37:8.
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd century BCE.

Everted rim bowl (Fig. 1:6)

D. rim 23 cm. (Inv.006)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one-fifth of the vessel. Moderate-temperature fired sandy orange-brown ware (5YR 6/6) with fairly dense small black and white grits. Greenish-yellow outer surface (5Y8.5/2)
Parallels: Qumran (de Vaux 1956:562, Fig.2:4).
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd - 1st century BCE.

Everted rim bowl (Fig. 1:7)
D. rim 15 cm. (Inv.007)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one-sixth of the vessel. Moderate-temperature fired sandy brown ware (5YR 5/4) with fairly dense small black and white grits. Greenish-yellow inner and outer surfaces (5Y9/2).
Parallels: Samaria-Sebaste III:256-266, Fig.56:6.
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd - 1st century BCE.

Everted rim bowl (Fig. 1:8)
D. rim 12.5 cm. (Inv.008)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving about one-tenth of the vessel. Moderate-temperature fired sandy orange-brown ware (5XR7/6) with occasional small black and white grits.
Parallels: Maresha (Kloner and Hess 1981:127, Fig.1:7).
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd - 1st century BCE.

Incurved rim bowl (Fig. 1:9)

Incurved rim bowl (Fig. 1:9)
D. rim 18.5 cm. (Inv.009)
Description: A fragment of rim and body preserving one-fifth of the vessel. Moderate-temperature fired sandy orange-red ware (2.5YR 5/10) with dark greyish-brown core (5YR 4/2) with fairly dense small-medium white grits.
Parallels: Samaria-Sebaste III:265-266, Fig.56:11; Tel Michal (Fischer 1989:179, Fig.13.2:3-4).
Suggested Date: ca. 3rd - 1st century BCE.

Flange-rim krater (Fig. 1:10)
D. rim 31 cm. (Inv.010)
Description: A fragment of rim and body with remnant of loop handle. Moderate-temperature fired sandy light brown ware (5YR 6/4) with fairly

dense small-medium grits. An incised double groove decorates the top of the rim.
Parallels: Caesarea (Berlin 1992:117, Fig.53:14).
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd - 1st century BCE.

Offset lip krater (Fig. 1:11)
D. rim 19 cm. (Inv.011)
Description: A fragment of rim and body. Moderate-temperature fired sandy brownish-orange ware (5YR 8/6) with fairly dense small black and white grits. Light brown inner and outer surfaces (5YR 6/4).
Parallels: Samaria-Sebaste III:289-290, Fig.69:3; Jerusalem (Tushingham 1985:41, Fig.23:30).
Suggested Date: ca. mid-1st century BCE. - mid-1st century CE

Cooking-pot (Fig. 1:12)
D. rim 14.5 cm. (Inv.012)
Description: A fragment of rim. Low-temperature fired sandy brownish-orange ware (2.5YR 6/6) with many small-medium black and white grits. Decorated with a single incised line on the outside below the rim.
Parallels: No exact parallels are known. This type is related to Samaria-Sebaste III:228-230, Fig.41:12,15,17; Samaria (Zayadin 1966:63, Pl.XXXI:90,92); Jerusalem (Tushingham 1985:39, Fig.18:35). It seems to be a local variant of a well-known group of cooking pots with an incised line below the rim occurring at Oboda (Negev 1986:95-96, Nos.798-799,803), where they date to the 1st century CE. representing the descendants of these Hellenistic forerunners.
Suggested Date: ca. mid-2nd - 1st century BCE.

Holemouth jar (Fig. 1:13)
D. rim 8.5 cm. (Inv.013)
Description: A fragment of rim and body. Moderate-temperature fired sandy light brown ware (5YR 6/4) with many small-medium black grits.
Parallels: Tel Anafa (Berlin 1988:198-199, Pl.63:HM3); Caesarea (Berlin 1992:118-119, Fig.54:6).
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd - 1st century BCE.

Collared-rim jar (Fig. 1:14)
D. rim 11.5 cm. (Inv.014)
Description: A fragment of rim and body. Moderate-temperature fired

sandy brownish-orange ware (2.5YR 6/6) with fairly dense small white and grey grits.
Parallels: Ashdod II-III:144, Fig.80:2; Shikmona (Elgavish 1974:27, 29,56, Pls.VI-VIII,X:212); Jerusalem (Tushingham 1985:57, Fig.24:2).
Suggested Date: ca. mid-2nd century BCE - 1st century CE.

Wheel-made lamp (Fig. 1:15)
L. nozzle 3.5 cm.; D. wick hole 0.6 cm. (Inv.015)
Description: A fragment preserving about one-third of the vessel. High-temperature fired fine brownish-orange ware (2.5YR 6/6) with occasional minute black grits. Covered with reddish-black slip (5R3/2) on the inside and patches of light brown slip (5YR 6/4) on the outside.
Parallels: Rosenthal and Sivan 1978:78, No.322 (listed bibliography there).
Suggested Date: ca. 2nd - 1st century BCE.

SUMMARY

The pottery assemblage discussed corresponds to the types in use from the late 3rd century BCE. to the 1st century CE. The majority of the finds (about 90%) date to the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE. The collared-rim jar only is assigned to the 1st century CE., although this type actually originates in the middle of the 2nd century BCE. Therefore, `En Besor Stratum I seems to be late Hellenistic in character and was presumably abandoned during the Roman occupation of Palestine by Pompeius Magnus.

ABREVIATIONS

D. = Diameter; L. = Length; Inv. = Inventory number; Numerical colour notations according to *Munsell Book of Colour*, 1970.

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3.3 FLINTS

3.3.1 NOTE ON THE FLINT IMPLEMENTS FROM 'EN BESOR

EPHRATH YEIVIN
(PUBLISHED 1976)

Technically, typologically and quantitatively, the flint assemblage at 'En Besor (Figs. 1, 2) is typical of the Early Bronze Age tools kit in Canaan. This is indicated by a number of features: the absolute dominance of blades, knives and sickle-blades (21 items, 55%; Fig. 1:7-22) (1), most of which are made of "Canaanite" blades; by a typical "Canaanite" core (Fig. 1:1,2); and by the dominance of the side and "fan" scrapers (6 items, 15%; Figs. 1:23, 2:1-6) (2).

The presence of Egyptian types (6 items, 15%; fig. 1:9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 21; Pl. I: 4-8) is also characteristic of Early Bronze Age sites in the southern coastal plain, e.g., Tel 'Erani (3), Azor (4), and some sites between Raphiah and Kantara in Northern Sinai (5).

However, the particular Egyptian types found at this site, which include three knives (Figs. 1:9, 10, 12) (6), and three types of sickle-blades (Figs. 1:13, 15, 21) (7), have for the present been found only at 'En Besor. One knife (Fig. 1:9) is imported, while the other tools may have been imported or manufactured locally in an Egyptian technique.

On the whole, the flint industry corroborates the conclusions drawn from the other finds concerning the character of the site.

Ed.: Ephrath Yeivin prepared the draft of this note a few weeks before her untimely death and did not see the final text of the proofs.